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JAMES REPLACE MORRISSEY AT GLASTERS

JUNE 27, 1992 65p

MELODY MAKER

TOMORROW'S MUSIC TODAY

GLASTONBURY SPECIAL

U2 SELLAFIELD DEMO
NIRVANA LIVE! ♦ CARTER USM

WHOSE LAND IS IT ANYWAY?

THE LEVELLERS lash the police ◆ THE SHAMEN say apocalypse now ◆ OZRICS cry freedom in the great Maker festival debate

ISSN 0025-9012

Battle of the Bean Field, Stonehenge. Pic: DAVID ROSE

GLASTONBURY SPECIAL

LAND O

BEST POSSIBLE FESTIVAL SITE:
Anywhere green with no police and no vigilante groups/ Downing Street/St James Park

WORST POSSIBLE SITE:
Wiltshire Police HQ

BEST IMPROVISED ACCOMMODATION:
Rizla paper for sheet, used match for warmth

WORST IMPROVISED ACCOMMODATION:
Barrett Homes

BEST ENVIRONMENTAL AROMA:
Dead police car/Wood smoke

WORST ENVIRONMENTAL AROMA:
Jeremy

BEST FOOD:
Good ol' veg curry/Ecstasy

WORST FOOD:
All the cash-in hot dog stands, etc

BEST FREEBIE:
Sex

WORST FREEBIE:
An arrest

BEST DRUG:
Ecstasy/Hashish

WORST DRUG:
LSD

BEST TRAVEL ACCESSORY:
Legs/Diesel

WORST TRAVEL ACCESSORY:
Flares

BEST THING TO DO IN A POLICE STATION:
Admit nothing/Get out

WORST THING TO DO IN A POLICE STATION:
Stay in there

BEST REASON FOR NOT GOING TO A FESTIVAL:
Too expensive to get in/The Wiltshire Constabulary Tea Time Band are headlining the bill

WORST REASON FOR NOT GOING TO A FESTIVAL:
Couldn't be bothered

Driven from county to county, field to field, the travellers have been attacked in the press, busted by the police and generally persecuted for their alternative lifestyle. On the eve of playing the Glastonbury Festival, THE LEVELLERS spoke out against the injustice in a statement they delivered to The Maker. ANN SCANLON meets the band of the people and investigates the causes for their grievance. Pics: TOM SHEEHAN

"TRUE FREEDOM LIES IN THE FREE enjoyment of the earth," declared Gerrard Winstanley in 1649. At that time, Winstanley and his comrades, The True Levellers, occupied St George's Hill, a patch of common land near Walton-On-Thames, and began to farm it for their own self-sufficiency. They were immediately labelled "a despicable generation of men" and "persons differing little from beasts", and were eventually driven off by government soldiers.

The rhetoric may have changed, but there's a definite parallel between Cromwell's description of The Levellers and the way that the tabloids refer to modern-day travellers as "scum" and "filth". There is even a Hippie Watch and a Hippie Hotline telephone service for landowners worried about imminent festival invasions.

If Winstanley was alive today, he would probably be under strict surveillance from the Hippie Watch, as he followed the festival trail from Castlemorton and Stonehenge to Cissbury Ring and the less publicised places where free and, to all extents and purposes, illegal gatherings are convening. Then again, he might have headed off to mainland Europe in the mid-Eighties, when hammers, rocks and truncheons became an increasingly popular method of policing England's free festival sites.

MELODY MAKER, June 13 1992

NEWS

LEVELLERS BLAST FESTIVALS

IN THE wake of the troubles at Castle Morton two weeks ago, The Levellers have surprisingly hit out at organised festivals such as Glastonbury and Reading. The band are claiming that modern-day festivals have moved so far from their original meaning that they are no longer even worthy of the name. They said this week: "The fact that only very large festivals can exist leads to problems with law enforcement. In such situations, people are not given responsibility for their own actions, and trouble occurs. Illegal events provoke illegal actions. If festivals were not outlawed, were smaller and happened on a regular basis all over the country, there would be less problems of this sort."

The band blame the Castle Morton troubles on legislation brought in by the Tories outlawing the gathering of large numbers of people. "Whose land is it anyway? They asked. "On the one hand, people are forbidden to gather together in one place, on the other, EEC farmers are paid large sums not to grow crops on their land.

"Since time began, festivals have taken place for a variety of reasons; celebratory, annual or seasonal, historical, or connected with pagan ritual. Most important was the realisation that festivals are a way of life. This can be clearly contrasted with the gradual introduction of new laws throughout the Eighties making virtually any sort of large gathering illegal, culminating with the recent introduction of laws specifically outlawing raves and festivals.

"These laws have led to the enforced banning of free festivals such as Stonehenge, and the necessity of large, organised festivals like Glastonbury. These purport to advocate the same way of life as ancient festivals, but by their very size and nature become commercial ventures, charging high admission prices, and needing among other things, fencing and security, both at a huge cost. Even those festivals which give their profits to charities and beneficial organisations (such as Greenpeace) need to pay bands large sums of money in order to persuade them to appear."

The Levellers, who are returning a sizeable part of their fee for Glastonbury to Greenpeace, added: "Although the existence of Glastonbury, Reading and other music festivals is not to be criticised, it is important to look beyond them."

> 'I've been locked up and they've searched my van. They can bust me for anything, they can do whatever they like, it won't change me' – Simon Leveller on the Police

ALTHOUGH all five Levellers – Jon, Charlie and Simon complete the line-up – have done their share of travelling, Jeremy is the only one who officially lives on the road.

"Actually, I'm not much of a traveller, I'm more of a stay-stiller," he laughs, pointing out that his truck has only left the band's Brighton base twice in the last six months.

Simon, however, spent much of the Eighties living on the road, and it was his bitter recollection of the way the police brutally broke up the Peace Convoy at Stonehenge in 1985 that inspired him to write one of The Levellers' most popular songs, "Battle Of The Beanfield": "*I see a pregnant woman/Lying in blood of her own/I see her children crying/As the police tore apart her home*".

"The police had no reason to go in there," he says. "There's no reason for smashing up homes and beating up pregnant women and little kids, and the police proved that by not having any numbers on their jackets. My old man used to give me so much stick for travelling and looking the way I do, until I showed him a video of Beanfield and told him about other places where the police have provoked riots. Once he saw that footage, and heard some of mine and my friends' experiences, his whole attitude changed and he suddenly realised what's going on in this country."

Although Simon wasn't directly involved in the Battle Of The Beanfield, he claims to have suffered "tons" of police harassment in his time.

"I've been locked up," he says. "And they've searched my van, which is tantamount to wrecking my home, but you get used to it. They can bust me for anything, they can do whatever they like, it won't change me. I went straight out hitchhiking as soon as I left school. I spent 18 years in an establishment that I didn't particularly agree with, and the last thing I wanted to do was to go to university and get more of the same.

"I'm not career-minded. I like sitting in stone circles, I like sitting by rivers, I like having a good time and smoking. I don't need lots of things to make me happy, and I believe that the best way to live is by example – show them that you can live happily and peacefully without all the things they reckon you need."

A HAPPY and peaceful existence is presumably what every traveller wants, but the free festival at Castlemorton provoked almost unprecedented uproar as the seasoned travellers were joined by thousands of ravers. Residents complained about savaged sheep, burnt fences, chopped trees, unburied excrement, drugs, litter and graffiti.

"People who live on the road *do* bury their shit, *don't* chop down trees and *don't* go round chasing sheep with f***in' knives," insists Jeremy. "The problem is that you get loads of people coming along who don't really know how to treat the countryside – y'know, they take too many drugs, lunch out, have a good time and then go home, leaving a real mess behind them. And the blame, as always, rests on the people who look scruffier than the rest because everyone thinks they must be messy bastards. But, if you live on the road, you have to be clean, otherwise you die, basically – you get ill and you die, and that's all there is to it."

But, despite the problems at Castlemorton, there isn't nearly as much friction between the travellers and the ravers as certain sections of the media have suggested.

"Both groups feed off each other," reasons Mark. "The travellers set up the rave, the ravers enjoy it and give the travellers some money and that's it: a symbiotic relationship. Both groups learn from each other – I mean, rave music is all you ever hear off travellers' buses these days, and ravers who might have been into taking Ecstasy get into smoking, which is good."

"It gives them a more passive outlook on life," smiles Jeremy. "When it all started, it was a good thing for the travelling communities stitching up the ravers to make loads of money, but now everyone's a bit wiser and I think it all works quite happily."

That said, it's not just the travellers and the ravers who are prepared to stitch up each other. In recent years, an increasing influx of profit-hungry drug

-THE FREE?

'I'm not career-minded. I like sitting in stone circles, I like sitting by rivers, I like having a good time and smoking. I believe the best way to live is by example' – Simon Leveller

dealers has caused problems. There have been savage beatings related to drug dealing at recent Glastonbury Festivals, and accusations that some of the merchandise is at best dodgy and at worst downright dangerous.

"Yeah, I hate that," says Mark. "When I first started going to festivals, you could get a good deal on everything and you weren't getting ripped off. You knew what you were getting; it was almost personal service. But by the end of the Eighties – which, yet again, is a direct result of the climate we're living in – people seemed to have forgotten what it was originally all about, which is communication and being generally friendly and enjoying yourself."

WHILE Mark and Jeremy agree that a series of permanent festival sites might alleviate friction between the travellers and the law, they can also see the drawbacks: "They did that when they set up the gypsy sites," sneers Mark. "But those turned into horrible f***in' council estates on the outskirts of villages."

The Levellers believe that the real way forward is to have smaller festivals, more frequently, all over the country.

"If you have lots and lots of small festivals," reasons Mark, "the chances of them getting out of hand or getting ugly are really slim, cos there'd be so many of them that people would always be moving on to the next one. Promoters should promote more festivals, not necessarily free ones, just cheap, so that we can get away from just having big centralised ones."

In the meantime, The Levellers will be donating all their profits from this weekend's Glastonbury appearance to Greenpeace, and then hitting America while England's summer festival season gets fully underway. (It's a little ironic that The Levellers didn't make it to Stonehenge last weekend because they were playing at the New Music Seminar – they were holed up in Manhattan's Paramount Hotel, which prides itself on catering to the "hip unrich", and where everyone – staff, guests, you name it – look like Richard Jobson.)

"All we're interested in," states Mark, "is that people should have the right to do what they want to, where they want to. Common land is for common people – it's just basic human rights to the land you're born on."

Gerrard Winstanley probably said much the same as the original Levellers fought for similar rights, near Walton-on-Thames, 343 years ago – although, as Jeremy points out, "Cliff Richard now lives on St George's Hill – yeah, times have definitely changed. . ."

THE LEVS' BEST FESTIVAL EXPERIENCES

JEREMY: "The Bus bar site in Amsterdam (1989) – just living there for a while, and seeing everything that I believe in actually working for the first time. I still see the people from there all over Europe."

JON: "The Elephant Fayre (1985) – a little festival with two headline bands (Killing Joke and Black Roots, I think); the atmosphere was excellent."

MARK: "The first one I ever went to which was The Elephant Fayre (possibly 1985) – just walking in and seeing all those people who felt vaguely the same as me – hippies, punks, bikers. I had a really good time getting out of it."

THE LEVS' WORST FESTIVAL EXPERIENCES

JEREMY: "Eating a hash cake at the same festival in Amsterdam (1989), and looning out bad."

JON: "Glastonbury (1990), when The Happy Mondays played. There were hordes and hordes of people wearing flares, with mud up to their knees – the flares must have weighed a ton each on each leg. Those people had no idea what a festival was about – there was shit everywhere. It was disgusting."

MARK: "The Tremore Festival (1989) – instead of spreading good things about, everyone was cashing in and spreading bad things (meningitis and hepatitis, among them). It pissed me and a lot of other people off with festivals for a long time."

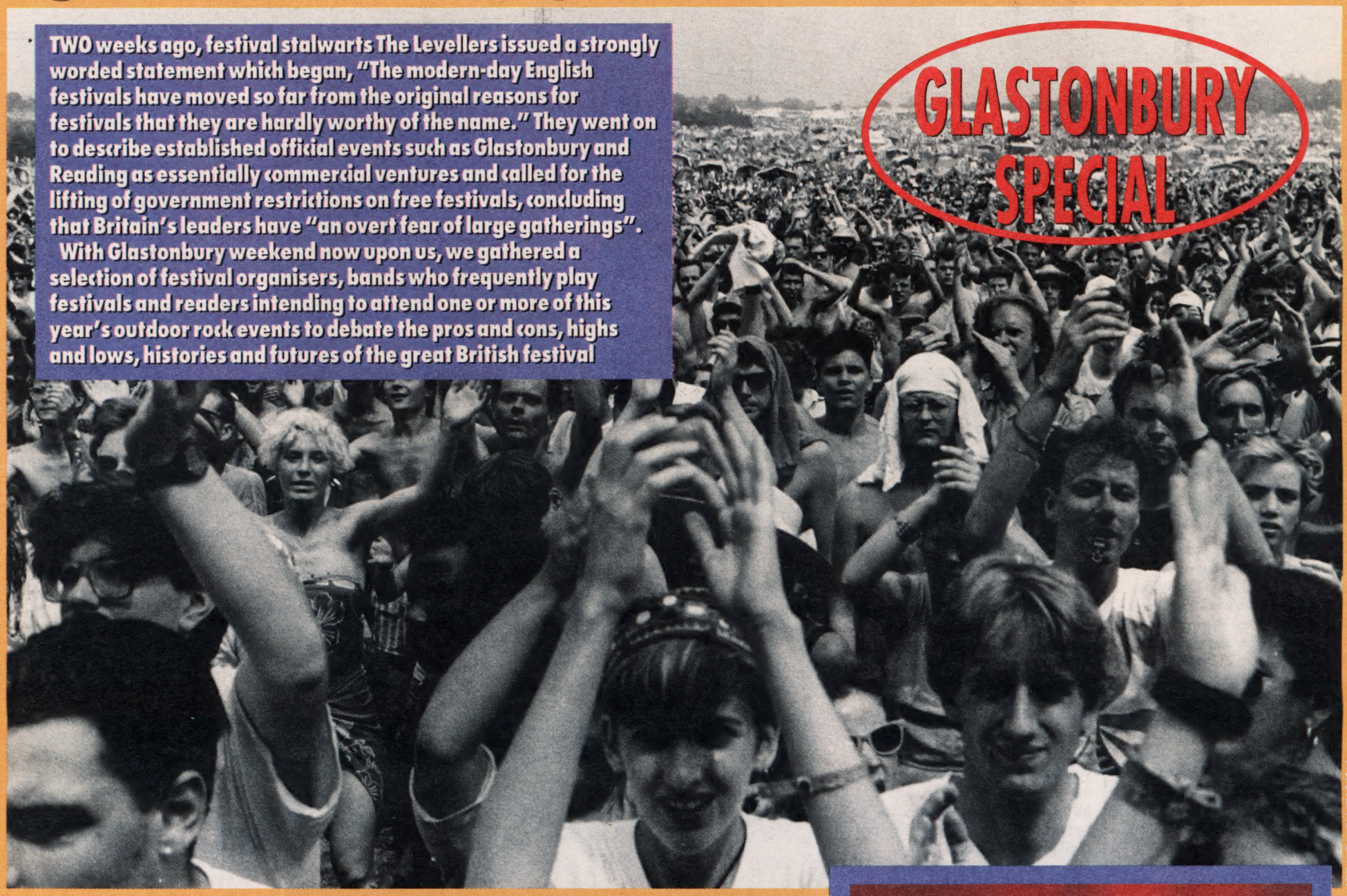
PRESSGANG

THE GREAT FESTIVAL DEBATE

TWO weeks ago, festival stalwarts The Levellers issued a strongly worded statement which began, "The modern-day English festivals have moved so far from the original reasons for festivals that they are hardly worthy of the name." They went on to describe established official events such as Glastonbury and Reading as essentially commercial ventures and called for the lifting of government restrictions on free festivals, concluding that Britain's leaders have "an overt fear of large gatherings".

With Glastonbury weekend now upon us, we gathered a selection of festival organisers, bands who frequently play festivals and readers intending to attend one or more of this year's outdoor rock events to debate the pros and cons, highs and lows, histories and futures of the great British festival

GLASTONBURY SPECIAL



Pic: STEPHEN SWEET

DEBATE PARTICIPANTS

MICHAEL EAVIS is the Somerset landowner who first launched the Glastonbury Festival in 1970 and, bar the odd year's break to appease Somerset locals, has staged it ever since.
MARTIN ELBOURNE is the promoter responsible for booking this year's festival bill.
The following artists who figured in our debate are appearing at this year's Glastonbury: **JUMPING JOHN EGAN** is spokesperson and flautist for **OZRIC TENTACLES**, who formed at a Stonehenge Free Festival in 1983 and have played the alternative festival circuit ever since.
SAM and **PAUL** belong to **THE MOONFLOWERS**, the Bristol band who are stalwarts of the free festival circuit.
STEPHEN and **GILES** from **THOUSAND YARD STARE**.
LEE from **DR PHIBES AND THE HOUSE OF WAX EQUATIONS**.
CARL and **FIL** from **BACK TO THE PLANET**, who recently played the illegal Castlemorton rave and have just supported The Levellers on tour.
Also present are Maker readers and festival-goers Fran, Vita, Rad, Ayesha, Janine, Tom, Stu, Ali, Ben, Liz, Matt and Graeme.

GLASTONBURY – WHY BOTHER?

MICHAEL EAVIS: "It started as a hobby in 1970 and grew and grew and grew. My wife thinks it's more trouble than it's worth. On a good day it's great, on a bad day I wish I'd never thought of it."
MM: What is your motivation for organising it?
ME: "We give away £150,000 or more every year to CND or, this year, Greenpeace. Glastonbury's actually a very efficient money-raiser for good causes. A lot of big rock gigs fall short of what they want to raise, but we don't. We break even, then any profits we give away to good causes."
MM: Does the festival make you unpopular with other locals?
ME: "It's not too bad. We only had six letters of objection to our license this year, maybe because we had the year off last year. But we give money to local charities which I think people appreciate. Glastonbury has always involved local people."
MM: What have been the major changes since 1970?
ME: "Diversification. We're spending £200,000 on theatre this year. It's second only to the Edinburgh Fringe. You could enjoy Glastonbury this year without even seeing one band. We're even building a stone circle this year. We want it to be 600 acres of absolute bliss."
JUMPING JOHN EGAN: "A stone circle? Wow! Just don't let the police anywhere near it!"

HOW HAS THIS YEAR'S BILL BEEN SELECTED?

MARTIN ELBOURNE: "We try to make the main stage very mixed. Friday is fairly alternative, so we have Carter USM, The Levellers, Fishbone and The Breeders. Saturday is the main headliners, who this year are Lou Reed and Morrissey, and Sunday is more laid-back. The second stage is more alternative, maybe for the younger fans. We have Primal Scream, Curve, Flowered Up, The Shamen, Ozrics, Lush, Cud, Dr Phibes, etc. There are a few interesting clashes. Carter and Primal Scream are on at the same time. . ."
MM: Is the bill varied enough? Where's the rap, the dance, the techno?
JANINE: "Why should the bill be mixed? I want to see a lot of bands I like. I don't care if there are no rap acts."
JJE: "Rap is boring!"
MM: That's a very blinkered attitude.
MARTIN: "The problem is a lot of rap bands don't cut it on massive stages. We have no objection to rap – Troublefunk and De La Soul have both gone down really well before. We'd put Public Enemy on like a flash, but unfortunately they're headlining Reading this year. The only people I'd *never* book for Glastonbury are heavy metal bands."
SAM MOONFLOWER: "Why not have a few bands who play every type of music?"
MARTIN: "You have to remember that Glastonbury also has the jazz/world music stage, and we put a wide diversity on there, and this year there's also an experimental music field. I think we're covering every option as well as we can."

GLASTONBURY – IS IT VALUE FOR MONEY?

RAD: "I just can't afford to go to Glastonbury this year. A ticket for the whole weekend costs £50. It's too expensive. A lot of kids my age can't afford it."

COLIN ANGUS, THE SHAMEN: "I haven't ever been to Reading – that was more Will's thing, and far too rock for me – but I have been to Glastonbury once, in 1986 or 1987. Nothing too weird happened, really, it was just the usual social event and gathering of the tribes. I mostly remember the rain and the mud, but I've got one or two happy memories of it, like the doughnut stand opposite the van we'd hired. Oh, and Julian Cope playing to about three people. There was a mad atmosphere.

"It seems strange to be playing Glastonbury after having been just another member of the audience. In fact, we're headlining on the Saturday. We'll probably stay for the whole weekend – I want to see 808 State.

"We're really looking forward to it – it will be the biggest crowd we've ever played in front of, anything from 100,000 to a quarter of a million people will be there. I'm particularly excited about performing the title track from 'Boss Drum', which is very Shamanic and will probably cause a few mini-apocalyptic experiences in the crowd!"

MR C, THE SHAMEN: "I've only been to Glastonbury once before. There were all these guys dressed up as aliens with long foreheads and no hair, like those men in the 'Tefal' advert. They had cameras as if they were tourists and they kept taking photos of people taking photos. They really were like proper aliens! I'll never forget them as long as I live."

CONTINUED OVER

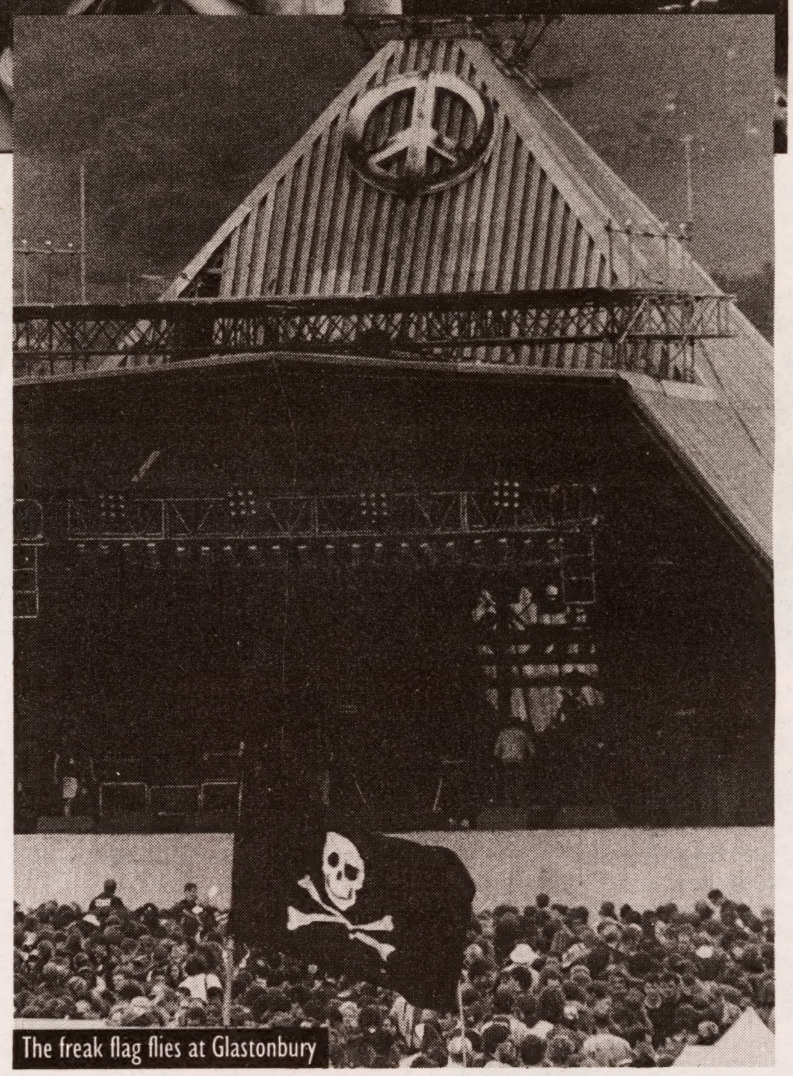
The Great Festival Debating Society (l-r): MM readers, Giles of Thousand Yard Stare, Martin Elbourne, Lee of Dr Phibes, Michael Eavis, Jumping John Egan, Sam and Paul of The Moonflowers, Carl and Fil of Back To The Planet, Stephen of Thosand Yard Stare

ME: "That's a shame, but sadly we've got a lot of overheads. The police cost us £325,000 per year now. God knows what they do for that much money. We had to build a four-mile perimeter wall round the site. That cost £100,000. And since those kids died at Donington, every festival has to have hard roads leading up to it. It's cost us a fortune. We're left with maybe £1 million to spend on bands and PAs, but we sail so close to the wind that in the final analysis the last 2,000 people make all the difference."
MM: How many artists get greedy?
MARTIN: "Artists are pretty good. Agents are worse. Most bands charge about half their going rate. I think The Cure charge half their normal fee. I know Morrissey does. We pay about half of what Reading does."
MM: How do people feel Reading compares to Glastonbury?
FIL PLANET: "Reading's boring. Really boring."
SAM: "It's a bit ugly really, isn't it?"
PAUL MOONFLOWER: "It just hasn't got that true festival spirit. It hasn't got that special feeling."
MARTIN: "Reading is a straightforward commercial venture. It just seems like a gig in a car park to me."
SAM: "People go to Reading to see the bands, and that's the end of it."
CARL PLANET: "The worst thing about Reading is how there are no vehicles on the site. Part of the festival spirit is that people drive their homes onto the field and *live* there for the week."
MM: Reading's bill has got better. I used to work there in the Meat Loaf years, when people would be paid thousands of pounds to come and get bottled off.
MARTIN: "Reading is a much younger audience than Glastonbury. It's very much sixth formers and students. We have a much older crowd. Some people come as their holiday each year, other people have come since the very first year."
MM: So Reading is a commercial venture and Glastonbury is still more of a lifestyle statement?
JJE: "Yeah, but don't forget it all started with Stonehenge Free Festivals. The 'henge still pulls a lot of people in, especially around the solstice..."

FREE FESTIVALS – THE WAY FORWARD?

MM: Tell us about the illegal Castlemorton rave festival which some of you have just played at.
CARL PLANET: "It was brilliant. Where else can you get 40,000 people together on a hot weekend with no security and hardly any water and have virtually no trouble? Free festivals go back to the true spirit of the original festivals. Nobody's making any money. Everyone's there for pleasure, and for the music."
MM: But is it fair to disrupt the lives of local people for a weekend?
SAM MOONFLOWER: "You have to put it in its greater context. There's 40,000 people wanting to have a party and really enjoy themselves, and maybe 100 people who live nearby have some temporary grief."
CARL: "And the pity is you have to go outside the law to organise an event like that. If there were good facilities and sensible laws, nothing would be disrupted."
SAM: "No disrespect to Glastonbury, because I do think the people there are trying to do the right thing, but a free festival doesn't cost a penny and you can see better bands in a weekend than in a whole year of normal gigging."
JJE: "You kids who can't afford Glastonbury should go to a few free festivals."
LEE PHIBES: "We've played some great free festivals in Wales."
STEPHEN STARE: "But how do people know about them? It's a very closed world, isn't it?"
CARL: "Not at all. All you have to do is telephone the Travellers Aid Trust and they'll give you a list of free festivals for the year. It's a whole alternative lifestyle and culture, and it's totally missed by the music papers and the media."
SAM: "But that doesn't matter. When you have 40,000 people meeting up for a huge party by word of mouth only, then you know you don't really need the media to make it work."
ME: "Well, Glastonbury has to be expensive because of all the costs I mentioned earlier, but I think people do sympathise with our aims. I hope so, anyway. I think they see we don't take any profit, it is a struggle for us, but at the end of the day we give £150,000 or £200,000 to CND or Greenpeace. I hope they think we've still got the true festival spirit as well."
(There's general agreement on this point.)

Welfare worries – a fan is crushed as The Cure play Glastonbury 1990



The freak flag flies at Glastonbury

GATHERING OF THE TRIBES?

MM: How much are festivals like Glastonbury a meeting-point and crossover between different groups of fans? Travellers, ravers and indie kids out for the weekend seem to co-exist peacefully.
STEPHEN STARE: "I think that's right. The best thing about going to festivals is spending time with like-minded people. It breaks down the barriers straight away. You don't know their names, but you know they're the same kind of people as you."
SAM MOONFLOWER: "Playing normal gigs is just a rehearsal for playing festivals, because festivals are a much more natural and enjoyable thing to play."
PAUL MOONFLOWER: "I think that something as huge as Glastonbury definitely restores your faith in people being able to come together, your faith in human nature."
CARL: "And it's really annoying that, whenever newspapers report festivals, they start putting people into groups like 'indie kids' and 'ravers', because the whole point is that everyone is so completely different! That's the whole point about why it's such a rich experience."
MM: Is Glastonbury making any plans to cater for rave and dance fans this year?
ME: "Yes. Two years ago we had spontaneous all-night raves, which gave us a lot of problems because we get fined for any speakers broadcasting after midnight, and could lose our license. So this year we're having an all-night radio station broadcasting rave music and we're asking people to bring headphones and transistor radios along."
(There's mass scepticism on the part of bands and fans alike that this solution will work.)
SAM: "That won't be enough! People want to keep going all night. What are you going to do if somebody just comes along in a van and starts blasting out music?"
ME: "Well, we'll try to stop them because we don't want to have any huge fines, and we think the radio station will be sufficient. Anyway, not everyone wants a huge rave next to where they've pitched their tent for the night."
SAM: "You'll have no chance. You'll have 10 sound systems going at once, mate."
MARTIN: "Well, we're also aiming to make people aware that there's a free festival 30 miles down the road with all-night music. Again, I'm afraid it's one of those things that once a festival is legal, like Glastonbury, we incur a whole lot of fresh costs and regulations. The free festivals can do things we're simply not allowed to."
JJE (to Michael Eavis): "Are you going to arrange for any aliens to visit, man?"
(There's mass bemusement all round.)

DRUGS – JUST SAY "WELL, MAYBE..."

MM: Do the police come down hard on Glastonbury drug dealers? What is your relationship with the police like?
ME: "They're okay, but they bloody should be when we have to pay £325,000 for them! No, they don't seem to muck people about. Last festival there were only 17 successful prosecutions for drugs offences."
JJE: "Wow! That's a good low result!"
ME: "And the police aren't concerned with cannabis, they just go after Ecstasy and acid. Sometimes they stop traffic coming into the field, but people just chuck the drugs out of the car window then find them again later!"
CARL: "Anyway, the drugs situation at festivals is no worse than anywhere else. Where I live, in Peckham, it's just the same. People are taking drugs all over the place. So what?"
SAM: "It's very rare any harm comes of it. People just want to sit and watch the world go by them, or even if they want to run about and go mental, it's their choice. But yeah, I guess unfortunately people do use drugs as a weapon to hassle against festivals with..."

PRESSGANG

FACILITIES – WHY DO PEOPLE PAY £50 FOR GLASTONBURY FESTIVAL THEN HAVE TO SHIT INTO A PIT IN THE GROUND?

CHORUS from readers: "Yeah, festival toilets are gross! Horrible!" etc, etc. . .

MARTIN: "Yeah, well they do get better each year, but at the end of the day, all we can really do at Glastonbury is dig a pit. To get enough water to run flushing toilets would be extraordinarily expensive. Chemical loos aren't too bad if they're not too hot, but they have to be emptied every half an hour or so."

JJE: "Chemical loos, turdy old doos."

SAM: "At the free festivals, travellers take a shit shovel and that's the most hygienic option of all, burying it in the ground. But some people are disgusting and just crap all over the place!"

JANINE: "I'd rather bury it in the ground than have to look down at that huge pit full of shit."

PAUL MOONFLOWER: "Two years ago at Glastonbury, one bloke managed to fall into it."

(Mass hysterical laughter.)

MM: But surely it's the inevitable consequence of the artificial situation of trying to cater for 50,000 people in a field over a weekend. Wouldn't it be far more sensible and practical to follow the American option of having fixed festival sites with full working facilities?

MARTIN: "Yeah, what would be ideal is something that could cope with commercial AND free festivals as required. Michael's always said that if somebody got a venue together in the West Country he'd put money into it, but nobody ever has. It's stupid, because the money the police would save on chasing free festivals round the country would pay for it. But there's so much disinformation. After Castlemorton, The Cure Oxfam concert is in doubt even though everybody in this room knows they're too entirely different types of events. But how do you explain that to a 50-year-old farmer? They just don't want to know. The best sites of all would be old disused military and air force bases. There's hundreds of them dotted round the country, they're not going to get used for anything else, and they've got toilets and drains and transport systems laid on already."

CARL: "There's very little common land in this country, and what little there is people are still being told they can't hold a party on. Well, what the hell else is it for?"

MM: Should there be a mass lobby for amenities like this?

SAM: "There should be, but nobody's doing it, to be honest, because nobody from the culture that's based round festivals even wants to talk to the kind of person you'd have to deal with to put the case across. It's a huge shame, because a brilliant free festival is the most positive experience you could ever have, and people are frightened off by ignorance and the media."

MARTIN: "At least it might mean an end to rip-offs like The Cult In The Park, which I went to, where security were frisking people on the gate and taking any food off them so they'd have to eat at the incredibly expensive food bars and spend even more money."

MM: And to eat there you had to like eating dead animals.

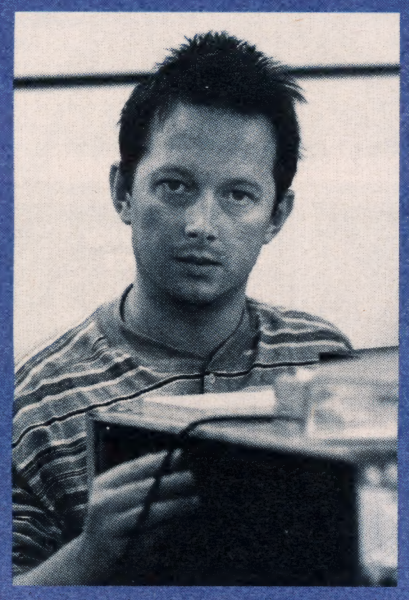
JANINE: "Yeah, there was hardly anything there for vegetarians."

JJE (to Michael Eavis):

NIALL LINEHAN, THE FRANK & WALTERS: "My favourite memory is of seeing New Order in 1989 at Reading. It absolutely poured with rain, and what was really funny was that I was up the front getting crushed – so I was dragged out by the bouncers. But I was so tightly wedged in that my trousers got torn off! I left my trousers in the crowd, and ended up on stage practically naked! I had to go and look for my trousers in the mud after everybody had gone, and I had three miles to walk back to where I was staying. I got drenched to the bone, and I was in bed with the flu for a week, so in a lot of ways it was the most miserable experience that you could imagine. But seeing New Order was so great that it was all worth it. In a funny kind of way, all the trouble just made the whole thing seem more amazing!"

GRAHAM MASSEY, 808 STATE: "I went to my first festival when I was 14. It was Reading in 1974, and it's really strange looking back cos they had all these groups like Hawkwind and Yes. It was totally progressive – these were the days when Dr Feelgood were considered weird! I think me mate's dad drove us down and, after that, we were just left there in the middle of this almost medieval village. I remember drinking loads of cider and rolling around in mud. Not much has changed has it? But when you're 14 this is absolutely top stuff. It put me off cider for life!

"I had a terrible toilet experience at WOMAD one year. I was in one of those communal toilets that are like a septic tank with seats on and doors all the way round. And I was just settling down to a really good crap and the door fell off! It wasn't like I could stop or anything, and there were about 40 people laughing their heads off. You've just got to abandon any pretensions of civilisation at these things.



"The main reason we wanted to do Glastonbury was that people have a lot of preconceptions about certain groups and going to a festival can really blow a lot of those preconceptions away. I like the idea of someone going to see Lou Reed and coming away impressed by us. We're looking forward to winning over a lot of people.

"Over the last few years, Glastonbury's become a lot more dance-orientated. The parties afterwards have been just as important as the stage stuff. I believe they're trying to clamp down a lot on that kind of thing going on which is a shame, cos setting up sound systems and stuff like that is a really important addition to the whole event."

WILLIAM POTTER, CUD: "I don't think festivals need bands, really. People should just go out into the fields and have a picnic with friends. I've never been tempted to go to a festival myself. I'm not into all this sitting round in fields smoking pot and drinking; and I don't know anybody who can afford a ticket, anyway! I don't like watching bands unless they have charisma, and you can't see charisma from a mile away."

CARL PUTTNAM, CUD: "When I was about 12, I went to Knebworth to see Led Zeppelin. Todd Rundgren played, and he did this long monologue about chewing coca leaves, and everybody cheered. Chas'N'Dave played as well – one of the most ludicrous support acts ever!

"I remember being a bit worried about not having the requisite long hair, because I was a skinhead at the time. I had really short hair and wore Fred Perrys, Sta-prest trousers and Harrington jackets like all my mates. But I suppose I was too small to attract any trouble. I could see Robert Plant all the time, though, and Jimmy Page with a laser pyramid around his head playing a 30-minute guitar solo. Those were my formative years!"

MARK E SMITH, THE FALL: "We're not actually very popular with festival folks, we don't seem to go down too well with the organisers. They've only just lifted the ban on us at Glastonbury. I said something about CND – in Melody Maker, actually – and we were banned from playing or even going, which I thought was the funny bit. I mean, if the bass player goes down there, who's going to recognise him? But there's only a week to go, so I don't suppose they can throw us off now; and I don't mean to be negative about it. I'm looking forward to it – it's something a bit different. A change from the usual smoke-filled dumps!

"We did one festival in Denmark, and they put us in a f***ing cage! They had Jethro Tull on and all that shit, and they had tents for dressing-rooms, but because we were punks, they put us in this cage and locked us in! I think they thought were going to be like Sid Vicious or something, and smash everything up; they were shouting at us all the time.

"As for Glastonbury – it doesn't pay very much, I can tell you that! I must admit I'm a bit ignorant about that part of the country. We're city boys, I'm afraid. The stage is a big pyramid with an eye in the middle, isn't it? I can't wait! I'll come back in shorts and a ponytail – it'll be all right!"

Tax? Insurance? Bald tyres? The cops get heavy during the Battle Of The Beanfield, Stonehenge 1985

Pic: DAVID ROSE

CONTINUED OVER

"Yeah, that's one thing Glastonbury needs, man. Less hamburgers."
PAUL: "That's one thing I don't like about Glastonbury; all the selling that goes on inside."
ME: "Well, aren't there stallholders at free festivals? Aren't the drug dealers there making money? I don't think we're that bad, really."
FIL PLANET: "No, I guess there's always going to be somebody trying to make money somewhere."
JJE (to everybody): "Where are you and what are the vibes like? Right above the centre of the Earth!"
(Repeat of mass bemusement.)

WHAT DO YOU HOPE FOR FROM GLASTONBURY THIS YEAR?

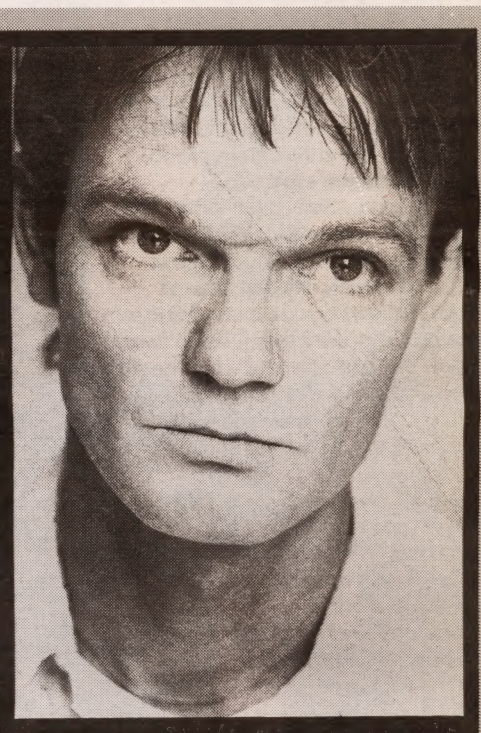
MARTIN: "Well, no repeat of the trouble we had two years ago when there were big fights between travellers and security on the day after the festival. I've heard two accounts of what happened and still don't really know, but it was upsetting because normally there's no violence at all at Glastonbury."
MM: In conclusion, what does everybody think is the way forward for festivals? How can Glastonbury and other festivals improve?
FIL: "More free festivals, and authorities making available sites for people to gather and enjoy themselves and listen to music. They have to. They can't stop this whole movement now, the whole travellers thing, it's too big."
SAM: "Festivals of any size can work providing the spirit is right. You've got your totally free festivals, then ones that cost £5 and maybe there are a few toilets that work, then the ones that cost £15 and have maybe a couple of famous bands, right up to Glastonbury, which I think we've seen has still got its spirit intact. People can get very ill on the unnatural day-to-day life we have to lead, and a big celebration like Castlemorton or Glastonbury can help you snap back into the spirit of how your life should be."
ME: "And don't forget, Glastonbury started off as a free festival all those years ago. It has its roots in the ideals as all you people are talking about 20 years later. It may have changed en route, but I sincerely hope it hasn't lost its way, and I don't think it has."

MELODY MAKER would like to thank all the participants kind enough to take part in this debate, and hope you all have a good festival season

Familiar Faces of The Great British Festival : Lee Phibes, Michael Eavis, Jumping John Ozric and Sam Moonflower await the arrival of The Alien

PATRICK, KITCHENS OF DISTINCTION: "I don't really understand festivals – playing during the day while the sun's out. To me, rock should be played at night, in dirty little clubs, not in front of 10,000 people tripping in the sunshine.
"All festivals make me think of is mud baths, too much rain, feeling sick all the time, suffering in the van on the drive there. Also the toilets. Why? Why do they do that?
"When we played Reading last year, Dan's drum kit fell to pieces and they had to hammer it together during the songs. He was playing the bass drum while they were trying to put the cymbals back together. It was straight out of 'Spinal Tap'.
"I suppose Glastonbury is worth doing, for people to do their acid, discover God, and go back to work the next day. But I mean, really! £50 for a ticket! Don't you think that's outrageous?"

GUY CHADWICK, THE HOUSE OF LOVE: "Festivals either work or they don't. Sometimes you can just hang around for what seems like an eternity, get too f***ed up for your own good and it can seem a bit pointless. Generally speaking, my feeling is that you go backstage and all the groups are as miserable as f***. They're just waiting for their bit, trying to look cool and everything. Then you go out front, and everyone's having a good time. My impression is that the audience enjoy themselves more than the groups do. It's just a weekend away for a lot of people who want to get off their faces and relax.



"We had a fight with Nirvana last year. The bass player came into our dressing-room and wanted to arm wrestle with someone, and someone lifted him up by his fingers. No, it wasn't me. I never pick people up by the fingers.
"People seem so cynical about festivals, they talk about them like it was just mud and chaos and bad sound and expensive beer and travelling miles to see groups that sound crap. I don't see it like that. Festivals, when they're good, are very spiritual."

Down and out in Glasters and Reading

GERARD LANGLEY, BLUE AEROPLANES: "Definitely the worst was the Glastonbury when it rained all the time, the one that was like the battle of the Somme with vegeburgers. I still have these visions of this pregnant woman blocking the artists' entrance, and people walking about dazed and drenched like extras from one of those nuclear catastrophe films. It was pitch black and I was still wearing these sunglasses. A nightmare."